

AN
E S S A Y
ON
M A N.

IN
FOUR EPISTLES.

BY
ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;



L O N D O N:
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Y A B C D

E F G H I

J K L M N O

P Q R S T U V



W O R D S

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THE DESIGN.

HA V I N G propos'd to write some pieces on human life and manners, such as (to use my Lord Bacon's expression) 'come home to men's business and bosoms,' I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his nature and his state: Since to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of human nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points: There are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind, as in that of the body, more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels as will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last, and I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice, more than advanced the theory, of morality. If I could flatter myself that this essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming out of all

The D E S I G N.

a temperate yet not inconsistent, and a short yet not imperfect system of Ethics.

This I might have done in prose ; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards. The other may seem odd, but is true; I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself: and nothing is truer than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious: Or more poetically, without sacrificing perspicuity to ornaments, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these without diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now published is only to be considered as a general map of man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extents, their limits, and their connexion, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Consequently, these epistles in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will become less dry, and more susceptible of ornament. I am here only opening the fountains, and clearing the passage: To deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, would be a task more agreeable.

T H E

THE CONTENTS.

EPISTLE I.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to the Universe.

OF Man in the abstract.--That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, ver. 17. &c. to 69. That man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, 69, &c. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, 73, &c. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice of his dispensations, 109 to 120. The absurdity of conceiving himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural, 127 to 164. The unreasonableness of his complaints against providence, while on the one hand he demands the perfections of the Angels, on the other hand the bodily qualifications of the brutes, 165. That to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miserable, 181 to 198. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The gra-

The CONTENTS.

elations of sense, instinct, thought, reflexion, reason, that reason alone countervails all the other faculties, 199 to 224. How much farther this order and subordination of living creatures may extend above and below us? Were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, 225 to 260. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to providence, both as to our present and future state, 273, &c.

EPISTLE II.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to himself as an individual.

THE business of man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature; his powers and frailties, and the limits of his capacity, 43. The two principles of man, self-love and reason, both necessary; self-love the stronger, and why? Their end the same, 83. The passions, and their use, 93 to 120. The predominant passion and its force, 122 to 150, its necessity in directing men to different purposes, 153, &c. its providential use, in fixing our principle and ascertaining our virtue, 167. Virtue and vice joined in our mixt nature; the limits near, yet the things separate, and evident. What is the office of reason? 187, &c. How odious vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it, 209. That however, the ends of providence and general good are answered in our passions, and imperfections, 330, &c. How useful they are distributed to all orders of men, 233. how usefully they are to society, 241, and to the individuals, 253. In every state, and in every age of life, 263; &c.

EPISTLE

THE CONTENTS.

EPISTLE III.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to Society.

THE whole universe one system of society, ver. 7, &c. Nothing is made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, 27. The happiness of animals mutual, 53. Reason or instinct operate alike to the good of each individual, 83. Reason or instinct operate also to society, in all animals, 109. How far society carried by instinct, 119. how much farther by reason, 132. Of that which is called the state of nature, 148. Reason instructed by instinct in the invention of arts, 150. and in the forms of society, 180. Origin of political societies, 199. Origin of monarchy, 211. Patriarchal government, 216. Origin of true religion and government, from the same principle of love, 125, &c. Origin of superstition and tyranny, from the same principle of fear, 241, &c. The influence of self-love operating to the social and public good, 269. Restoration of true religion and government on their first principle, 285. Mixt government, 289. Various forms of each, and the true end of all, 303, &c.

EPISTLE IV.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to Happiness.

Happiness ill defined by the philosophers, ver. 19. That it is the end of all men, and attainable by all, 28. God governs by general, not particular laws: intends happiness to be equal, and to be so, it must be social, since all particular happiness depends on general, 35. As it is necessary for order, and the peace and welfare of society, that
external

The CONTENTS.

external goods should be unequal. Happiness is not made to consist in these, 47. But notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of happiness among mankind is kept even by providence, by the two passions of hope and fear, 66. What the happiness of individuals is, as far as is consistent with the constitution of this world: And that the good man has here the advantage, 76. The error of imputing to virtue what are only the calamities of nature, or of fortune, 92. The folly of expecting God should alter his general laws in favour of particulars, 118. That we are not judges who are good. But that whoever they are, they must be happiest, 130, &c. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of virtue, 166. That even these can make no man happy without virtue. Instanced in riches, 176. Honours, 184. Birth, 203. Greatness, 213. Fame, 233. Superior talents, 257. with pictures of human infelicity in men possess of them all, 275, &c. That virtue only constitutes a happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal, 304, &c. That the perfection of virtue and happiness consists in a conformity to the order of providence here, and a resignation to it here, and hereafter, 326, &c.





A N
E S S A Y
O N
M A N.

E P I S T L E I.

WAKE! my *St. John*! leave all meaner things
 A To low ambition, and the pride of kings.
 Let us (since life can little more supply,
 Than just to look about us, and to die)
 Expatriate free o'er all this Scene of Man ; 5
 A mighty maze! but not without a plan ;
 A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot ;
 Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
 Together let us beat this ample field,
 Try what the open, what the covert yield ; 10
 The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
 Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar ;

Eye

10 ESSAY ON MAN.

Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can; 15
But vindicate the ways of God to man.

Say first, of God above, or man below,
What can we reason, but from what we know?
Of man, what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer? 20
Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.

He, who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns, 25
What vary'd being peoples ev'ry star,
May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.
But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd through? or can a part contain the whole?

Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee.

Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find, 35
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?

First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?

Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade! 40

Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
Why Jove's Satellites are less than Jove?

Of systems possible, if 'tis confess'd
That wisdom infinite must form the best,

Where

EPISTLE I.

11

Where all must full or not coherent be, 45

And all that rises, rise in due degree ;

Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,

There must be, somewhere, such a rank as man:

And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)

Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong? 50

Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,

May, must be right, as relative to all.

In human works, though labour'd on with pain,

A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;

In God's, one single can its end produce; 55

Yet serves to second too some other use.

So man, who here seems principal alone,

Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,

Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;

'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why man restrains

His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;

When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,

Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god:

Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend 65

His actions', passions', being's, use and end;

Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and why

This hour a slave, the next a deity?

Then say not, Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;

Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought: 70

His knowledge measur'd to his state and place;

His time a moment, and a point his space.

If to be perfect in a certain sphere,

What matter, soon or late, or here or there?

The blest to day is as completely so, 75

As who began a thousand years ago.

Heav'n

12 E S S A Y O N M A N.

Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state:
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer being here below?

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher death; and God adore.
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be blest:
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd, from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind; 100
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd, 105
Some happier island in the watry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.

E P I S T L E I.

13

To be, contents his natural desire,
 He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire; 110
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.

Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense,
 Weigh thy opinion against providence;
 Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such, 115
 Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
 Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
 Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;
 If man alone ingrosses not Heav'n's high care,
 Alone made perfect here, immortal there: 120
 Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
 Re-judge his justice, be the GOD of GOD.
 In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
 All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies,
 Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125
 Men would be angels, angels would be Gods.
 Aspiring to be Gods, if angels fell,
 Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:
 And who but wishes to invert the laws
 Of order, sins against th' Eternal cause. 130

Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
 Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine:
 For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,
 Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
 Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew 135
 The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
 For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
 For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
 Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
 My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies." 140

B

But

14 E S S A Y O N M A N.

But errs not nature from this gracious end,
 From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
 "No ('tis reply'd) the first Almighty cause 145
 Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
 Th' exceptions few; some change since all began:
 And what created perfect?"---Why then Man?
 If the great end be human happiness,
 Then nature deviates; and can man do less? 150
 As much that end a constant course requires
 Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of man's desires;
 As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
 As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.
 If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
 Why then a Borgia, or a Cataline? 156
 Who knows but he, whose hand the light'ning forms,
 Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms;
 Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind, 159
 Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
 From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;
 Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
 Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?
 In both, to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear, 165
 Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
 That never air or ocean felt the wind;
 That never passion discompos'd the mind.
 But all subsists by elemental strife;
 And passions are the elements of life. 170
 The gen'ral order, since the whole began,
 Is kept in nature, and is kept in Man.

What

EPISTLE I.

15

What would this Man? Now upward will he soar,
And little less than angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears 175
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.

Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all;
Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd; 180

Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.

Each beast, each insect, happy in its own: 185
Is Heav'n unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleas'd with nothing, if not bless'd with all!

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find),
Is not to act or think beyond mankind; 190
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.

Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say what the use, were finer optic's giv'n, 195
T'inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?

Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore?
Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatick pain? 200

If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still
The whisp'ring Zephyr, and the purling rill?

16 ESSAY ON MAN

Who finds not providence all good and wise, 205
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

Far as Creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:
Mark how it mounts, to Man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass: 210

What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood 215

To that which warbles through the vernal wood?
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew? 220

How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine!
'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier?
For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!

Remembrance and reflection how ally'd; 225
What thin partitions sense from thought divide?
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!

Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee? 230
The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one?

See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go! 235
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!

Vast

EPISTLE I.

17

205 Vast chain of being ! which from God began,
 Natures æthereal, human, angel, man,
 Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
 No glass can reach ; from infinite to thee, 240
 From thee to nothing.--On superior pow'rs
 210 Were we to press, inferior might on ours :
 Or in the full creation leave a void,
 Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd :
 From nature's chain whatever link you strike, 245
 Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
 215 And, if each system in gradation roll
 Alike essential to th' amazing whole,
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall. 250
 Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
 220 Planets and suns run lawless through the sky ;
 Let ruling Angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
 Being on being wreck'd, and world on world ;
 Heav'ns whole foundations to their centre nod, 255
 And nature trembles to the throne of God.
 225 All this dread order break--for whom ? for thee ?
 Vile worm ! --oh madness ! pride ! impiety !
 What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
 Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head ? 260
 What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
 30 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind ?
 Just as absurd for any part to claim
 To be another, in this gen'ral frame :
 Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains, 265
 The great directing mind of all ordains.
 35 All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
 Whose body nature is, and God the soul ;

18 E S S A Y O N M A N .

That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same ;
 Great in the earth, as in th' æthereal frame ; 270
 Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
 Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part, 275
 As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;
 As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
 As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns :
 To him no high, no low, no great, no small ;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all. 280
 Cease then, nor order imperfection name:
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
 Know thy own point : This kind, this due degree
 Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
 Submit.--In this, or any other sphere, 285
 Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
 Safe in the hand of one disposing pow'r,
 Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
 All nature is but art, unknown to thee ;
 All chance, direction, which thou canst not see ; 290
 All discord, harmony, not understood ;
 All partial evil, universal good :
 And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
 One truth is clear, " Whatever is, is right."



EPISTLE

E P I S T L E II.

K NOW then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is Man.

Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side, 5
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a God, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err; 10
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;
Created half to rise and half to fall; 15
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

Go, wond'rous creature! mount where science
guides,

Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; 20
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
Correct old time, and regulate the sun;
Go, soar with Plato, to th' empyreal sphere,
To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;
Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod, 25
And quitting sense call imitating God;

As

20 ESSAY ON MAN.

As Eastern priests in giddy circles run,
And turn their heads to imitate the sun,
Go, teach Eternal wisdom how to rule--
Then drop into thyself, and be a fool !

30

Superior beings, when of late they saw
A mortal man unfold all nature's law,
Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
And shew'd a Newton as we shew an ape.

Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind,
Describe or fix one movement of his mind ;
Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
Explain his own beginning, or his end ?

35

Alas what wonder ! Man's superior part
Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art ;
But when his own great work is but begun,
What reason weaves, by passion is undone,

40

Trace science then, with modesty thy guide ;
First strip off all her equipage of pride ;
Deduct what is but vanity, or dress,
Or learning's luxury, or idleness ;
Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,
Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain ;
Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts
Of all our vices have created arts ;

50

Then see how little the remaining sum,
Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come !

Two principles in human nature reign ;
Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain ;
Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,
Each works its end, to move or govern all :
And to their proper operation still,
Ascribe all good, to their improper, ill.

55

Self-

E P I S T L E II.

21

Self love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
Reason's comparing balance rules the whole. 60

Man, but for that, no action could attend,
And, but for this, were active to no end:

Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,
To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot ;
Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void, 65
Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.

Most strength the moving principle requires ;
Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires.

Sedate and quiet, the comparing lies,
Form'd but to check, delib'rate and advise. 70

Self-love still stronger, as its objects nigh ;
Reason's at distance, and in prospect lie :

That sees immediate good by present sense ;
Reason, the future and the consequence.

Thicker than arguments, temptations throng, 75
At best more watchful this, but that more strong.

The action of the stronger to suspend
Reason still use, to reason still attend.

Attention, habit and experience gains ;
Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains. 80

Let subtle school-men teach these friends to fight,
More studious to divide than to unite;

And grace and virtue, sense and reason split,
With all the rash dexterity of wit.

Wits, just like fools, at war about a name, 85
Have full as oft no meaning, or the same.

Self-love and reason to one end aspire,
Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire ;

But greedy that its object would devour,
This taste the honey, and not wound the flow'r: 90

Pleasure

22 E S S A Y O N M A N .

Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,
Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

Modes of self-love the passions we may call :

'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all :

But since not ev'ry good we can divide,

95

And reason bids us for our own provide ;

Passions, though selfish, if their means be fair,

Lift under reason, and deserve her care ;

Those, that imparted, court a nobler aim,

Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name.

100

In lazy Apathy let Stoics boast

Their virtue fix'd, 'tis fix'd as in a frost ;

Contracted all, retiring to the breast ;

But strength of mind is exercise, not rest :

The rising tempest puts in act the soul,

105

Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.

On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,

Reason the card, but passion is the gale ;

Nor God alone in the still calm we find,

He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind.

110

Passions, like elements, though born to fight,

Yet, mix'd and soften'd, in his work unite :

These 'tis enough to temper and employ ;

But what composes man, can man destroy ?

Suffice that reason keep to nature's road,

115

Subject, compound them, follow her and God,

Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train,

Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain,

These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,

Make and maintain the balance of the mind :

120

The lights and shades, whose well accorded strife

Gives all the strength and colour of our life.

Plea-

EPISTLE II

23

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes ;
And when, in act, they cease, in prospect, rise :
Present to grasp, and future still to find, 125
The whole employ of body and of mind.

95 All spread their charms, but charm not all alike ;
On diff'rent senses diff'rent objects strike ;
Hence diff'rent passions more or less enflame,
As strong or weak, the organs of the frame ; 130
And hence one master passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

100 As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
Receives the lurking principle of death ;
The young disease, that must subdue at length, 135
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his
105 So, cast and mingled with his very frame, (strength :
The mind's disease, its ruling passion came ;
Each vital humour which should feed the whole,
Soon flows to this, in body and in soul : 140
Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
As the mind opens, and its functions spread,
110 Imagination plies her dang'rous art,
And pours it all upon the peccant part.

Nature its mother, habit is its nurse ; 145
Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse ;
Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r ;
115 As heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sow'r.

We, wretched subjects though to lawful sway,
In this weak queen, some fav'rite still obey : 150
Ah ! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,
What can she more than tell us we are fools ?
Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,
A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend !

Or

24 E S S A Y O N M A N .

Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade 155
 The choice we make, or justify it made;
 Proud of an easy conquest all along,
 She but removes weak passions for the strong:
 So, when small humours gather to a gout,
 The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out. 160
 Yes, nature's road must ever be preferr'd;
 Reason is here no guide, but still a guard;
 'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,
 And treat this passion more as friend than foe:
 A mightier pow'r the strong direction sends, 165
 And sev'ral men impels to sev'ral ends:
 Like varying winds, by other passions tost,
 This drives them constant to a certain coast.
 Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, please,
 Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease; 170
 Through life 'tis follow'd, ev'n at life's expence;
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
 All, all alike, find reason on their side.
 Th' Eternal Art educing good from ill, 175
 Grafts on this passion our best principle:
 'Tis thus the mercury of man is fix'd,
 Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd;
 The dross cements what else were too refin'd,
 And in one int'rest body acts with mind. 180
 As fruits ungrateful to the planter's care,
 On savage stocks inserted learn to bear;
 The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
 Wild nature's vigour working at the root.
 What crops of wit and honesty appear 185
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear!

See

EPISTLE II.

25

See anger, zeal and fortitude supply ;
 Ev'n av'rice, prudence ; sloth, philosophy ;
 Lust, through some certain strainers well refin'd,
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind : 190
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave,
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave :
 Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,
 But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.

Thus nature gives us (let it check our pride) 195

The virtue nearest to our vice ally'd :

Reason the byas turns to good from ill,

And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.

The fiery soul abhor'd in Cataline,

In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine. 200

The same ambition can destroy or save,

And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

This light and darkness in our chaos join'd,

What shall divide? the God within the mind.

Extremes in nature equal ends produce, 205

In man they join to some mysterious use ;

Though each by turns, the other's bound invade,

As, in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,

And oft so mix, the diff'rence is too nice

Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice. 210

Fools! who from hence into the notion fall,

That vice or virtue there is none at all.

If white and black blend, soften, and unite

A thousand ways, is there no black or white?

Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain ; 215

'Tis to mistake them, costs the time and pain.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,

As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;

C

Yet

See

26 E S S A Y O N M A N .

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace. 220
 But where th' extreme of vice, was ne'er agree'd:
 Ask where's the North! at York, 'tis on the Tweed:
 In Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,
 At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where:
 No creature owns it in the first degree, 225
 But thinks his neighbour further gone than he.
 Ev'n those who dwell beneath its very zone,
 Or never feel the rage, or never own;
 What happier natures shrink at with affright,
 The hard inhabitant contends is right. 230
 Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,
 Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree;
 The rogue and fool, by fits is fair and wise,
 And ev'n the best, by fits, what they despise.
 'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill, 235
 For vice, or virtue, Self directs it still;
 Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal;
 But Heav'n's great view is one, and that the whole:
 That counter-works each folly and caprice;
 That disappoints th' effect of ev'ry vice: 240
 That, happy frailties to all ranks apply'd,
 Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,
 Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,
 To kings presumption, and to crowds belief,
 That virtue's ends from vanity can rise, 245
 Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind,
 The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.
 Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
 A master, or a servant, or a friend, 250
 Bids

EPISTLE II.

27

Bids each on other for assistance call,
 'Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.
 Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally,
 The common int'rest, or endear the tie :
 To these we owe true friendship, love sincere, 255
 Each home-felt joy that life inherits here ;
 Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,
 Those joys, those loves, those int'rests to resign ;
 Taught half by reason, half by mere decay,
 To welcome death, and calmly pass away. 260

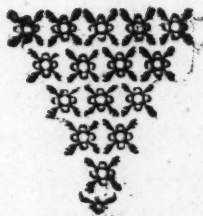
Whate'er the passion, knowledge, fame or pelf,
 Not one will change his neighbour with himself.
 The learn'd is happy, nature to explore,
 The fool is happy that he knows no more ;
 The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n,
 The poor contents him with the care of Heav'
 See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
 The sot a hero, lunatic a king ;
 The starving chymist in his golden views
 Supremely blest, the poet in his muse. 270

See some strange comfort ev'ry state attend,
 And pride bestow'd on all, a common friend :
 See some fit passion ev'ry age supply,
 Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.

Behold the child, by nature's kindly law, 275
 Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw :
 Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,
 A little louder, but as empty quite :
 Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage ;
 And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age : 280
 Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before ;
 'Till tir'd he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er !

28 E S S A Y O N M A N .

Mean-while opinion gilds with varying rays
 Those painted clouds that beautify our days ;
 Each want of happiness by hope supply'd, 285
 And each vacuity of sense by pride :
 These build as fast as knowledge can destroy ;
 In folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy ;
 One prospect lost, another still we gain ;
 And not a vanity is giv'n in vain ; 290
 Ev'n mean self-love becomes, by force divine,
 The scale to measure others wants by thine.
 See ! and confess, one comfort still must rise,
 'Tis this, Though man's a fool, yet God is wise.



EPISTLE

EPISTLE III.

HERE then we rest: 'The universal cause
Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.'

In all the madness of superfluous health,

The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,

Let this great truth be present night and day;

But most be present, if we preach or pray.

Look round our world; behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above.

See plastic nature working to this end,

The single atoms each to other tend,

Attract, attracted to, the next in place

Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.

See matter next, with various life endu'd,

Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good.

See dying vegetables life sustain,

See life dissolving vegetate again:

All forms that perish other forms supply,

(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die)

Like bubbles on the sea of matter born,

They rise, they break, and to that sea return.

Nothing is foreign: parts relate to whole;

One all-extending, all-preserving soul

Connects each being, greatest with the least;

Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;

All serv'd, all serving! nothing stands alone;

The chain holds on, and, where it ends, unknown.

Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,

Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?

30 E S S A Y O N M A N .

Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
For him as kindly spread the flow'ry lawn.

30

Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings ?

Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings :

Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat ?

Loves of his own and raptures swell the note :

The bounding steed you pompously bestride,

35

Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride :

Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain ?

The birds of heav'n shall vindicate their grain :

Thine the full harvest of the golden year ?

Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer :

40

The hog, that plows not, nor obeys thy call,

Lives on the labours of this lord of all.

Know, nature's children shall divide her care,

The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear.

While man exclaims, " See all things for my use !" 45

" See man for mine !" replies a pamper'd goose ;

And just as short of reason he must fall,

Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the pow'rful still the weak controul,

Be man the wit and tyrant of the whole :

50

Nature that tyrant checks ; he only knows,

And helps another creature's wants and woes,

Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,

Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove ?

Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings ?

55

Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings ?

Man cares for all ; to birds he gives his woods,

To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods ;

For some his int'rest prompts him to provide,

For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride ;

60

All

E P I S T L E III.

321

All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy.

Th' extensive blessing of his luxury.

That very life his learned hunger craves,

He saves from famine, from the savage saves ::

Nay, feasts the animal, he dooms his feast,

And, till he ends the being, makes it blest ;

Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,

Than favour'd man by touch ætherial slain.

The creature had his feast of life before ;

Thou too must perish when thy feast is o'er !

To each unthinking being, Heav'n a friend,

Gives not the useless knowledge of its end ;

To man imparts it ; but with such a view,

As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too :

The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear,

Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.

Great standing miracle ! that Heav'n assign'd,

Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

Whether with reason, or with instinct blest,

Know, all enjoy that pow'r which suits them best ;

To bliss alike by that direction tend,

And find the means proportion'd to their end.

Say, where full instinct is th' unerring guide,

What pope or council can they need beside ?

Reason, however able, cool at best,

Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,

Stays till we call, and then not often near ;

But honest instinct comes a volunteer ;

Sure never to o'er-shoot, but just to hit,

While still too wide or short is human wit ;

Sure by quick nature happiness to gain,

Which heavier reason labours at in vain.

This

32 E S S A Y O N M A N.

This too serves always, reason never long ;
 One must go right, the other may go wrong.
 See then the acting and comparing pow'rs, 95
 One in their nature, which are two in ours,
 And reason raise o'er instinct as you can,
 In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis man.

Who taught the nations of the field and wood
 To shun their poison, and to choose their food ? 100
 Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand,
 Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand ?
 Who made the spider parallels design,
 Sure as De-moivre, without rule or line ?
 Who bid the stork, Columbus-like, explore 105
 Heav'ns not his own, and worlds unknown before ?
 Who calls the council, states the certain day,
 Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way ?

God, in the nature of each being, sounds
 Its proper bliss, and sets it proper bounds : 110
 But as he fram'd a whole, the whole to bless.
 On mutual wants built mutual happiness :
 So from the first eternal order ran,
 And creature link'd to creature, man to man.
 Whate'er of life all-quick'ning æther keeps, 115
 Or breathes thro' air, or shoots beneath the deeps,
 Or pours profuse on earth ; one nature feeds
 The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.
 Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,
 Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, 120
 Each loves itself, but not itself alone,
 Each sex desires alike, till two are one.
 Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace ;
 They love themselves, a third time, in their race.

Thus

EPISTLE III.

33

Thus beast and bird their common charge attend, 125

The mothers nurse it, and the fires defend ;

The young dismiss'd to wander earth or air,

There stops the instinct, and there ends the care ;

The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,

Another love succeeds, another race. 130

A longer care man's helpless kind demands ;

That longer care contracts more lasting bands :

Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,

At once extend the int'rest and the love ;

With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn ; 135

Each virtue in each passion takes its turn ;

And still new deeds, new helps, new habits rise,

That graft benevolence on charities.

Still as one brood, and as another rose,

These nat'ral love maintain'd, habitual those : 140

The last, scarce ripen'd into perfect man,

Saw helpless him from whom their life began :

Mem'ry and fore-cast just returns engage,

That pointed back to youth, this on to age ;

While pleasure, gratitude, and hope combin'd, 145

Still spread the int'rest and preserv'd the kind.

Nor think, in nature's state they blindly trod :

The state of nature was the reign of God :

Self-love and social at her birth began,

Union the bond of all things, and of man. 150

Pride then was not ; nor arts, that pride to aid :

Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade ;

The same his table, and the same his bed ;

No murder cloath'd him, and no murder fed.

In the same temple, the resounding wood, 155

All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God :

The:

34 E S S A Y O N M A N .

The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
 Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest :
 Heav'n's attribute was universal care,
 And man's prerogative to rule, but spare. 166
 Ah ! how unlike the man of times to come !
 Of half that live the butcher and the tomb ;
 Who, foe to nature, hears the gen'ral groan,
 Murders their species, and betrays his own.
 But just disease to luxury succeeds, 167
 And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds ;
 The fury-passions from that blood began,
 And turn'd on man a fiercer savage, man.
 See him from nature rising slow to art !
 To copy instinct then was reason's part ; 170
 Thus then to man the voice of Nature spake---
 " Go, from the creatures thy instructions take :
 Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield ;
 Learn from the beasts the physic of the field ;
 Thy arts of building from the bee receive ; 175
 Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave ;
 Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
 Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.
 Here too all forms of social union find,
 And hence let reason, late, instruct mankind : 180
 Here subterranean works and cities see ;
 There towns ærial on the waving tree.
 Learn each small people's genius, policies,
 The ant's republic, and the realm of bees ;
 How those in common all their wealth bestow, 185
 And anarchy without confusion know ;
 And these for ever, though a monarch reign,
 Their sep'rate cells and properties maintain.

Mark

E P I S T L E III.

35

Mark what unvary'd laws preserve each state,
Laws wise as nature, and as fix'd as fate. 190

In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw,

Entangle justice in her net of law,

And right, too rigid, harden into wrong ;

Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.

Yet, go ! and thus o'er all the creatures sway, 195

Thus let the wiser make the rest obey,

And for those arts mere instinct could afford,

Be crown'd as monarchs, or as gods ador'd."

Great nature spoke ; observant man obey'd ;

Cities were built, societies were made : 200

Here rose one little state ; another near

Grew by like means, and join'd, thro' love or fear.

Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,

And there the streams in purer rills descend ?

What war could ravish, commerce could bestow, 205

And he return'd a friend, who came a foe.

Converse and love mankind might strongly draw,

When love was liberty, and nature law.

Thus states were form'd ; the name of king unknown,

'Till common int'rest plac'd the sway in one. 210

'Twas virtue only (or in arts or arms,

Diffusing blessings, or averting harms)

The same which in a fire the sons obey'd,

A prince the father of a people made.

'Till then, by nature crown'd, each patriarch sate, 215

King, priest, and parent of his growing state ;

On him, their second-providence, they hung,

Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.

He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,

Taught to command the fire, controul the flood, 220

Draw

36 E S S A Y O N M A N

Draw forth the monsters of th' abyfs profound,
 Or fetch th' ærial eagle to the ground.
 'Till drooping, sick'ning, dying, they began
 Whom they rever'd as God to mourn as man :
 Then, looking up from fire to fire, explor'd 225
 One great first father, and that first ador'd.
 Or plain tradition that this all begun,
 Convey'd unbroken faith from fire to son,
 The worker from the work distinct was known,
 And simple reason never sought but one : 230
 E'er wit oblique had broke that steady light,
 Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right,
 To virtue, in the paths of pleasure, trod,
 And own'd a father when he own'd a God.
 Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then ; 235
 For nature knew no right divine in men,
 No ill could fear in God ; and understood
 A sov'reign being but a sov'reign good.
 True faith, true policy, united ran,
 That was but love of God, and this of man. 240
 Who first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone,
 Th' enormous faith of many made for one ;
 That proud exception to all nature's laws,
 T' invert the world, and counter-work its cause ?
 Force first made conquest, and that conquest, law ; 245
 'Till superstition taught the tyrant awe,
 Then shar'd the tyranny, then lent it aid,
 And gods of conqu'rors, slaves of subjects made :
 She, midst the light'ning's blaze, and thunder's sound,
 When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the
 ground, 250
 She

EPISTLE III.

37

She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray,
 To pow'r unseen, and mightier far than they :
 She, from the rending earth and bursting skies,
 Saw gods descend, and fiends infernal rise :
 Here fix'd the dreadful, there the blest abodes ; 255
 Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods ;
 Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
 Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust :
 Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
 And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe. 260
 Zeal then, not charity, became the guide,
 And hell was built on spite, and heav'n on pride.
 Then sacred seem'd th' ætherial vault no more ;
 Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore ;
 Then first the flamen tasted living food, 265
 Next his grim idol smear'd with human blood ;
 With heav'n's own thunder shook the world below,
 And play'd the god an engine on his foe.
 So drives self-love, through just and through unjust,
 To one man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust : 270
 The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause
 Of what restrains him, government and laws.
 For, what one likes, if others like as well,
 What serves one will, when many wills rebel ?
 How shall he keep, what, sleeping or awake, 275
 A weaker may surprize, a stronger take ;
 His safety must his liberty restrain :
 All join to guard what each desires to gain.
 Forc'd into virtue thus by self-defence,
 Ev'n Kings learn'd justice and benevolence : 280
 Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd,
 And found the private in the public good.

D

'Twas

'Twas then, the studious head or gen'rous mind,
 Follow'r of God, or friend of human kind,
 Poet or patriot, rose but to restore 285
 The faith and moral, nature gave before;
 Resum'd her antient light, not kindl'd new:
 If not God's image, yet his shadow drew:
 Taught pow'r's due use to people and to kings,
 Taught not to slack, nor strain its slender strings, 290
 The less, or greater, set so justly true,
 That touching one, must strike the other too;
 Till jarring int'rests of themselves create
 Th' according music of a well-mix'd state.
 Such is the world's great harmony, that springs 295
 From order, union, full consent of things!
 Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made
 To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade,
 More pow'rful each, as needful to the rest,
 And, in proportion, as it blesses, blest; 300
 Draw to one point, and to one centre bring
 Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.
 For forms of government let fools contest,
 Whate'er is best administer'd is best:
 For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight; 305
 His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right;
 In faith and hope the world will disagree,
 But all mankind's concern is charity:
 All must be false, that thwart this one great end,
 And all of God, that bless mankind or mend. 310
 Man, like the gen'rous vine, supported lives;
 The strength he gains, is from th' embrace he gives.
 On their own axis as the planets run,
 Yet make at once their circle round the sun;

EPISTLE III.

39

So two consistent motions act the soul;
And one regards itself, and one the whole.

315

Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
And bade self-love, and social be the same.



D 2

EPISTLE.

E P I S T L E IV.

OH Happiness! our being's end and aim,
 Good, pleasure, ease, content! whate'er thy
 name :

That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
 For which we bear to live, or dare to die,
 Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies, 5
 O'er-look'd, seen double, by the fool, and wise.
 Plant of celestial seed; if dropt below,
 Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?
 Fair op'ning to some court's propitious shine,
 Or deep with di'monds in the flaming mine? 10
 Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,
 Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field?
 Where grows?--where grows if not?--if vain our toil,
 We ought to blame the culture, not the soil :
 Fixt to no spot is happiness sincere, 15
 'Tis no where to be found, or ev'ry where;
 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
 And fled from monarchs, ST. JOHN! dwells with thee.

Ask of the learn'd the way, the learn'd are blind,
 This bid to serve, and that to shun mankind; 20
 Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,
 Those call it pleasure, and contentment these;
 Some sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain;
 Some swell'd to gods, confess ev'n virtue vain;
 Or indolent, to each extreme they fall, 25
 To trust in ev'ry thing, or doubt of all.

Who

EPISTLE IV. 41

Who thus define it, say they more or less
Than this, That happiness is happiness!

Take Nature's path, and mad Opinion's leave,
All states can reach it, and all heads conceive; 30
Obvious her goods, in no extremes they dwell,
There needs but thinking right, and meaning well;
And mourn our various portions as we please,
Equal is common sense, and common ease.

Remember, man, the universal Cause. 35
" Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws ;"
And makes what happiness we justly call
Subsist not in the good of one, but all.
There's not a blessing individuals find,
But some way leans and hearkens to the kind. 40
No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,
No cavern'd hermit, rests self-satisfy'd.
Who most to shun or hate mankind pretend,
Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend.
Abstract what others feel, what others think, 45
All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink ;
Each has his share ; and who would more obtain,
Shall find, the pleasure pays not half the pain.

Order is Heav'n's first law ; and this confess,
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest, 50
More rich, more wise ; but who infers from hence
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.
Heav'n to mankind impartial we confess,
If all are equal in their happiness :
But mutual wants this happiness increase, 55
All nature's diff'rence, keeps all nature's peace.
Condition, circumstance is not the thing ;
Bliss is the same in subject or in king,

42 E S S A Y O N M A N.

In who obtain defence, or who defend,
 In him who is, or him who finds a friend : 60
 Heav'n breathes through ev'ry member of the whole,
 One common blessing, as one common soul
 But fortune's gifts, if each alike possess,
 And each were equal, must not all contest ?
 If then to all men happiness was meant, 65
 God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
 And these be happy call'd, unhappy those ;
 But Heav'n's just balance equal will appear,
 While those are plac'd in hope, and these in fear : 70
 Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
 But future views of better, or of worse.

Oh sons of earth ! attempt ye still to rise,
 By mountains pil'd on mountains, to the skies ?
 Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys, 75
 And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

Know all the good that individuals find,
 Or God and nature meant to mere mankind ;
 Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
 Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence. 80
 But health consists with temperance alone ;
 And peace, oh Virtue ! peace is all thy own.
 The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain ;
 But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.
 Say, in pursuit of profit or delight, 85
 Who risk the most, that take wrong means or right ?
 Of vice or virtue, whether blest or curst,
 Which meets contempt, or which compassion first ?
 Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains,
 'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains : 90

And

And grant the bad what happiness they wou'd,
One they must want, which is, to pass for good.

Oh blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,
Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe!

Who sees and follows that great scheme the best, 95
Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.

But fools, the good alone, unhappy call,
For ills or accidents that chance to all.

See Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just!

See god-like Turenne prostrate on the dust! 100

See Sidney bleeds amid the martial strife!

Was this their virtue, or contempt of life?

Say, was it virtue, more though Heav'n ne'er gave,

Lamented Digby! sunk thee to the grave?

Tell me, if virtue made the son expire, 105

Why, full of days and honour lives the sire?

Why drew Marseille's good bishop purer breath,

When Nature sicken'd, and each gale was death!

Or why so long in life (if long can be)

Lent Heav'n a parent to the poor and me? 110

What makes all physical or moral ill?

There deviates nature, and here wanders will.

God sends not ill, if rightly understood,

Or partial ill is universal good,

Or change admits, or nature lets it fall; 115

Short, and but rare, till man improv'd it all.

We just as wisely might of Heav'n complain

That righteous Abel was destroy'd by Cain,

As that the virtuous son is ill at ease

When his lewd father gave the dire disease. 120

Think we, like some weak prince, th' eternal Cause,

Prone for his fav'rites to reverse his laws?

Shall

44 E S S A Y O N M A N.

Shall burning *Ætna*, if a sage requires,
 Forget to thunder, and recal her fires?
 On air or sea new motions be imprest, 125
 Oh blameless *Bethel*! to relieve thy breast?
 When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
 Shall gravitation cease, if you go by?
 Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
 For *Chartres*' head reserve the hanging wall? 130
 But still this world (so fitted for the knave)
 Contents us not. A better shall we have!
 A kingdom of the just then let it be:
 But first consider how those just agree.
 The good must merit God's peculiar care; 135
 But who, but God, can tell us who they are?
 One thinks on *Calvin* Heav'n's own Spirit fell?
 Another deems him instrument of Hell;
 If *Calvin* feel Heav'n's blessing, or its rod,
 This cries there is, and that, there is no God. 140
 What shocks one part will edify the rest,
 Nor with one system can they all be blest.
 The very best will variously incline,
 And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.
 Whatever is, is RIGHT,--This world, 'tis true, 145
 Was made for *Cæsar*--but for *Titus* too!
 And which more blest? who chain'd his country, say,
 Or he whose virtue sigh'd to lose a day?
 "But sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed."
 What then? is the reward of virtue bread? 150
 That, vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil;
 The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil,
 The knave deserves it, when he tempts the main,
 Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.

The

EPISTLE. IV.

45

The good man may be weak, be indolent; 155

Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.

But grant him riches, your demand is o'er?

"No--shall the good want health, the good want pow'r?"

Add health, and pow'r, and ev'ry earthly thing,

"Why bounded pow'r? why private? why no king?"

Nay, why external for internal giv'n? 160

Why is not man a God, and earth a Heav'n?

Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive,

God gives enough, while he has more to give:

Immense the pow'r, immense were the demand; 165

Say, at what part of nature will they stand?

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,

The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,

Is virtue's prize; a better would you fix?

Then give humility a coach and six, 170

Justice a conqu'ror's sword, or truth a gown,

Or public spirit its great cure, a crown.

Weak, foolish man! will Heav'n reward us there

With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?

The boy and man an individual makes, 175

Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes?

Go, like the Indian, in another life

Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife:

As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,

As toys and empires, for a god like mind. 180

Rewards, that either would to virtue bring

No joy, or be destructive of the thing:

How oft by these at sixty are undone

The virtues of a Saint at twenty-one!

To whom can riches give repute, or trust, 185

Content, or pleasure, but the good and just?

Judges

46 E S S A Y O N M A N.

Judges and senates have been bought for gold,
 Esteem and love were never to be sold.
 Oh fool ! to think God hates the worthy mind,
 The lover and the love of human kind, 190
 Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
 Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.

Honour and shame from no condition rise ;
 Act well your part, there all the honour lies.
 Fortune in men has some small difference made, 195
 One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade ;
 The cobbler apron'd, and the parson gown'd,
 The frier hooded, and the monarch crown'd.
 " What differ more (you cry) than crown and cowl !"
 I'll tell you, friend ! a wise man and a fool. 200
 You'll find, if once the monarch acts the Monk,
 Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,
 Worth makes the man, and want of it, the fellow ;
 The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Stuck o'er with titles and hung round with strings,
 That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings.
 Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race, 205
 In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece :
 But by your father's worth if your's you rate,
 Count me those only who were good and great. 210
 Go ; if your antient, but ignoble blood
 Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood,
 Go ! and pretend your family is young ;
 Nor own, your fathers have been fools so long.
 What can ennoble sets, or slaves, or cowards ? 215
 Alas ! not all the blood of all the HOWARDS.
 Look next on greatness ; say where greatness lies.
 " Where, but among the herces and the wise !"

Heroes

EPISTLE VI.

47

Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,
From Macedonia's madman to the Swede; 220
The whole strange purpose of their lives, to find
Or make, an enemy of all mankind!
Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
Yet ne'er looks forward further than his nose.
No less alike the politic and wise; 225
All fly slow things, with circumspective eyes:
Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,
Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.
But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat;
'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great: 230
Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,
Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.
Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,
Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed 235
Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.

What's fame? A fancy'd life in others breath,
A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death.
Just what you hear, you have, and what's unknown
The same (my lord) if Tully's, or your own. 240
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes or friends;
To all beside as much an empty shade
An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead;
Alike or when, or where, they shone, or shine, 245
Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.
A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
An honest Man's the noblest work of God.
Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
As justice tears his body from the grave; 250

When

48 E S S A Y O N M A N .

When what t'oblivion better were resign'd,
Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.
All fame is foreign, but of true desert ;
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart :
One self-approving hour whole years out-weighs 255
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas ;
And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

In parts superior what advantagelies ?
'Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise ? 260
'Tis but to know how little can be known ;
To see all others faults, and feel our own :
Condemn'd in bus'ness or in arts to drudge,
Without a second, or without a judge :
Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land ? 265
All fear, none aid you, and few understand.
Painful pre-eminence ! yourself to view
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring then these blessings to a strict account,
Make fair deductions, see to what they mount. 270
How much of other each is sure to cost ;
How each for other oft is wholly lost ;
How inconsistent greater goods with these ;
How sometimes life is risk'd, and always ease :
Think, and if still the things thy envy call, 275
Say, would'st thou be the man to whom they fall ?
To sigh for ribbands if thou art so silly,
Mark how they grace lord Umbra, or Sir Billy.
Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life ?
Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife, 280
If parts allure thee think how Bacon shin'd,
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind :

Or

EPISTLE IV.

47

Or ravish'd with the whistling of a name,
See Cromwell, damn'd to everlasting fame!

If all, united, thy ambition call,

285

From antient story learn to scorn them all.

There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
See the false scale of happiness complete!

In hearts of Kings, or arms of Queens who lay,
How happy those to ruin, these betray.

290

Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose.

In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,

And all that rais'd the hero, sunk the man;

Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold,

295

But stain'd with blood, or ill exchange'd for gold:

Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,

Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.

Oh wealth ill-fated! which no act of fame

E'er taught to shine, or sanctify'd from shame!

300

What greater bliss attends their close of life?

Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,

The trophy'd arches, story'd halls invade,

And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.

Alas! not dazzled with their noon-tide ray,

305

Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day;

The whole amount of that enormous fame,

A tale, that blends their glory with their shame!

Know then this truth (enough for man to know)

"Virtue alone is Happiness below."

310

The only point where human bliss stands still,

And tastes the good without the fall to ill;

Where only merit constant pay receives,

Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives;

E

The

50 E S S A Y O N M A N .

The joy unequal'd, if its end it gain, 315
 And if it lose, attended with no pain :
 Without satiety, though e'er so blest'd,
 And but more relish'd as the more distress'd :
 The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,
 Less pleasing far than virtue's very tears : 320
 Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd,
 For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd ;
 Never elated, while one man's oppress'd ;
 Never dejected, while another's blest'd ;
 And where no wants, no wishes can remain, 325
 Since but to wish more virtue, is to gain.

See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow !
 Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know :
 Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
 The bad must miss ; the good, untaught, will find ;
 Slave to no sect, who takes no private road, 331
 But looks through Nature, up to Nature's God ;
 Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,
 Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine ;
 Sees, that no being any bliss can know, 335
 But touches some above, and some below ;
 Learns, from this union of the rising Whole,
 The first, last purpose of the human soul ;
 And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
 All end, in LOVE of GOD, and LOVE of MAN : 340
 For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal,
 And opens still, and opens on his soul ;
 'Till lengthen'd on to Faith, and unconfin'd,
 It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.
 He sees, why Nature plants in Man alone 345
 Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown :

(Nature

EPISTLE IV.

51

(Nature, whose dictates to no other kind
Are given in vain, but what they seek they find)
Wife is her present; she connects in this
His greatest virtue with his greatest bliss; 350
At once his own bright prospect to be blest,
And strongest motive to assist the rest.

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.
Is this too little for the boundless heart? 355
Extend it, let thy enemies have part:

Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,
In one close system of benevolence:
Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of bliss but height of charity. 360

God loves from whole to parts: but human soul
Must rise from individual to the Whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre mov'd, a circle strait succeeds, 365
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace;
His country next, and next all human race;
Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind; 370
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And Heav'n beholds its image in his breast.

Come then, my friend! my genius! come along;
Oh master of the poet, and the song!
And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends, 375
To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise;

52 E S S A Y O N M A N .

Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
 From grave to gay, from lively to severe : 80
 Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
 Intent to reason, or polite to please.
 Oh ! while along the stream of time thy name
 Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
 Say, shall my little bark attendant sail, 385
 Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale ?
 When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
 Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
 Shall then this verse to future age pretend
 Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend ? 390
 That urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
 From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart ;
 For wit's false mirror held up Nature's light ;
 Shew'd erring pride, Whatever is, is RIGHT ;
 That REASON, PASSION, answer one great aim ; 395
 That true SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL are the same ;
 That VIRTUE only makes our bliss below ;
 And all our knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW.



T H E

T H E
UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

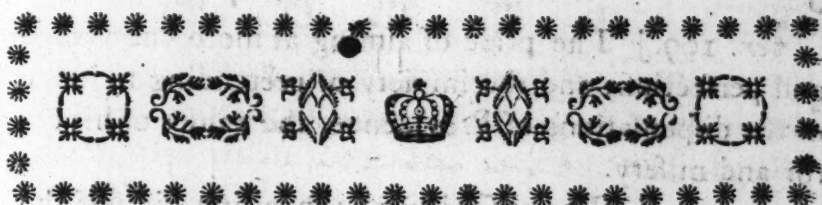
D E O O P T I M O M A X I M O .

FATHER of all ! in ev'ry age,
 In ev'ry clime ador'd,
 By faint, by savage, and by sage,
 Jehovah, Jove, or Lord !
 Thou great first Cause, least understood :
 Who all my sense confin'd
 To know but this, that thou art good,
 And that myself am blind ;
 Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
 To see the good from ill ;
 And binding nature fast in fate,
 Left free the human will.
 What conscience dictates to be done,
 Or warns me not to do,
 This, teach me more than hell to shun,
 That, more than heav'n pursue.
 What blessings thy free bounty gives,
 Let me not cast away ;
 For God is paid when man receives,
 T' enjoy is to obey.
 Yet not to earth's contract'd span
 Thy goodness let me bound,
 Or think thee Lord alone of man,
 When thousand worlds are round :

54 UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
 Presume thy bolts to throw,
 And deal damnation round the land,
 On each I judge thy foe.
 If I am right, thy grace impart,
 Still in the right to stay ;
 If I am wrong, oh teach my heart
 To find that better way.
 Save me alike from foolish pride,
 Or impious discontent,
 At aught thy wisdom has deny'd,
 Or aught thy goodness lent.
 Teach me to feel another's woe ;
 To hide the fault I see ;
 That mercy I to others show,
 That mercy show to me.
 Mean though I am, not wholly so,
 Since quick'ned by thy breath ;
 Oh lead me wheresoe'er I go,
 Through this day's life or death.
 This day, be bread and peace my lot :
 All else beneath the sun,
 Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,
 And let thy will be done.
 To Thee, whose temple is all space,
 Whose altar, earth, sea, skies !
 One chorus let all being raise !
 All nature's incense rise !

NOTES



N O T E S

O N T H E E S S A Y O N M A N.

E P I S T L E I.

OF the nature and state of Man, with respect to the universe.

ver. 17, &c.] He can reason only from things known, and judge only with regard to his own system.

ver. 36, &c.] He is therefore a judge of his own perfection or imperfection, but is certainly such a being as is suited to his place or rank in the creation.

ver. 73.] His happiness depends on his ignorance to a certain degree.

ver. 75, &c.] See this pursued in Epist. III. *ver. 70, &c. 83, &c.*

ver. 87.] --- And on his hope of a relation to a future state.

ver. 90.] Further open'd in Epist. II. *ver. 265.---* Epist. III. *ver. 78.---* Epist. IV. *ver. 336, &c.*

ver.

ver. 109.] The pride of aiming at more knowledge and perfection, and the impiety of pretending to judge of the dispensations of Providence, the causes of his error and misery.

ver. 127.] The absurdity of conceiting himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural.

ver. 162.] See this subject extended in Epist. H. from *ver. 90*, to *112*, *155*, &c.

ver. 166.] The unreasonableness of the complaints against Providence, and that to possess more faculties would make us miserable.

ver. 182. Here, with degrees of swiftness, there of force.] It is a certain axiom in the anatomy of creatures, that in proportion as they are formed for strength, their swiftness is lessened; or as they are formed for swiftness, their strength is abated.

ver. 185.] Vid. Epist. III. *ver. 83*, &c. and *110*, &c.

ver. 200.] There is an universal order and gradation thro' the whole visible world, of the sensible and mental faculties, which causes the subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man, whose reason alone countervails all the other faculties.

ver. 213. The headlong lionsess.] The manner of the lions hunting their prey in the deserts of Africa is this; at their first going out in the night time they set up a loud roar, and then listen to the noise made by the beasts in their flight, pursuing them by the ear, and not by the nostril. It is probable, the story of the jackal's hunting for the lion was occasioned by observing the defect of scent in that terrible animal.

ver.

ver. 225.] How much farther this gradation and subordination may extend? were any part of which broken, the whole connected creation must be destroyed.

ver. 250.] The extravagance, impiety, and pride of such a desire.

ver. 265.] Vid. the prosecution and application of this in *Epist.* IV. *ver.* 160.

ver. 273.] The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state.

E P I S T L E II.

Of the nature and state of Man as an individual. The business of Man is not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature, his power, frailties, and the limits of his capacity.

ver. 43.] **T**HE two principles of man, self-love and reason, both necessary, 49. Self-love the stronger, and why? 57. their end the same, 71.

ver. 83.] The passions, and their use.

ver. 122, &c.] The predominant passion, and its force.

The use of this doctrine, as applied to the knowledge of mankind, is one of the subjects of the second book.

ver. 155.] Its necessity, in directing men to different purposes. The particular application of this to the several pursuits of men, and the general good resulting thence, falls also into the succeeding books.

ver. 165.] Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue.

ver.

ver. 185, &c.] Virtue and vice joined in our mixed nature; the limits near, yet the things separate, and evident. The office of reason.

ver. 207.] Vice odious in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it.

ver. 221, &c.] The ends of Providence and general good answered in our passions and perfections. How usefully these are distributed to all orders of men.

ver. 239.] How useful these are to society in general, and to individuals in particular, in every state, 250. and every age of life, 260.

ver. 273.] See farther of the use of this principle in man, *Epist.* III. v. 121, 124, 134, 144, 199, &c. 269, &c. 316, &c. And *Ep.* IV. v. 357, and 367.

E P I S T L E III.

Of the nature and state of man, with respect to society.

The whole universe one system of society.

ver. 27.] **N**OTHING is made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, but the happiness of all animals mutual.

ver. 72.] Several of the ancients, and many of the Orientals since, esteemed those who were struck by lightening as sacred persons, and the particular favourites of Heaven.

ver. 83.] Reason or instinct alike operate to the good of each individual, and they operate also to society, in all animals.

ver. 115.] How far society is carried by instinct.

ver. 132.] How much farther society is carried by reason.

ver.

ver. 148.] Of the state of nature: that it was social.

ver. 170.] Reason instructed by instinct in the invention of arts, and in the forms of society.

ver. 178.] Oppian. Halieut. lib. I. describes this fish in the following manner: "They swim on the surface of the sea, on the back of their shells, which exactly resemble the hulk of a ship: they raise two feet like masts, and extend a membrane between, which serves as a sail; the other two feet they employ as oars at the side. They are usually seen in the Mediterranean."

ver. 200.] Origin of political societies.

ver. 211.] ----- of monarchy.

ver. 216.] ----- of patriarchal government.

ver. 236.] ----- of true religion and government, from the principle of Love; and of superstition and tyranny, from that of Fear.

ver. 270.] The influence of self-love operating to the social and public good.

ver. 284.] Restoration of true religion and government on their first principles. Mix'd governments; with the various forms of each, and the true use of all.

E P I S T L E IV.

Of the nature and state of Man, with respect to happiness.

ver. 27.] **H**APPINESS the end of all men, and attainable by all.

ver. 47.] It is necessary for order and the common peace, that external good be unequal, therefore happiness is not constituted in these.

ver.

ver. 65.] The balance of human happiness kept equal (notwithstanding externals) by hope and fear.

ver. 75.] In what the happiness of individuals consists, and that the good man has the advantage, even in this world.

ver. 91.] That no man is unhappy thro' virtue.

ver. 177.] That external goods are not the proper rewards of virtue: often inconsistent with, or destructive of it; but that all these can make no man happy without virtue; instanced in each of them.

1 Riches. 2 Honours. 3 Titles. 4 Birth.
5 Greatness. 6 Fame. 7 Superior parts.

ver. 300.] That virtue only constitutes a happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal.

ver. 318, &c.] That the perfection of happiness, consists in a conformity to the order of Providence here, and a resignation to it, here and hereafter.

F I N I S



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